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IBACH TO EXPLORE AGRICULTURE EXPORT OPPORTUNITIES TO AFRICAN EMERGING MARKETS

LINCOLN – Nebraska Department of Agriculture (NDA) Director Greg Ibach will be in Ghana, Nov. 17-20, to explore opportunities and develop strategies for increasing Nebraska agriculture exports to several emerging markets in Africa. He will be part of a U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) trade mission that is being led by USDA Deputy Secretary Krysta Harden.

According to USDA, participants will meet with potential customers from more than a dozen countries across sub-Saharan Africa.

“To my knowledge this is the first time a Nebraska government representative has been on an official business trip to look at export opportunities to the continent of Africa,” said Ibach. “We’ve already laid the groundwork with Ghanaian and Ugandan officials, who recently have traveled to Nebraska. The hope is to eventually gain access to all sub-Saharan countries in Africa, which have a growing middle class and surging demand for agricultural products.”

The sub-Saharan region of Africa is considered to be all countries south of the Sahara Desert. Over the past decade, U.S. agricultural exports to the region have grown by more than 50 percent, totaling \$2.3 billion in 2014, according to USDA.

In separate meetings earlier this year, Ibach and other Nebraska state officials, university staff and business representatives met with Ghanaian and Ugandan officials in Nebraska. The visits were meant to begin building the diplomatic framework needed to open up the appropriate channels for Nebraska agricultural products and agronomic services to those countries.

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“Trade agreements are not something that happens overnight,” said Ibach. “It takes a long-term commitment to work through the appropriate processes and make the right connections. Our past work with Uganda and Ghana has given us a strong foothold in those countries and created a precedent for developing additional opportunities in sub-Saharan Africa.”

In 2014, Nebraska agriculture exports to Ghana were approximately \$1.5 million and Uganda exports were approximately \$257,000, according to NDA estimates based on USDA data. Total Nebraska agricultural exports to sub-Saharan African countries in 2014 were estimated at \$65.8 million.

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